



CHANDAMAMA

JUNE 1991

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The Mystery

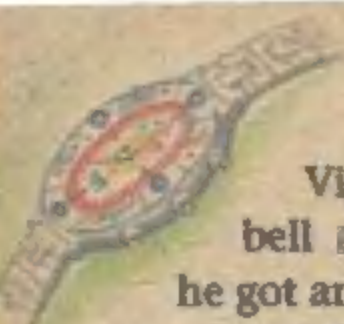
First the Circus Crook. The Joker was the crook. Three cheers for guessing it right! The Secret Seekers are now on the trail of the Mad Vassovich, on their BSA SLRs. Scientists say he has a baby UFO to blow up New City. Can the Secret Seekers stop him?

Baby, tomorrow morning at 5.00, you and I blow up New City," came Vassovich's squeaky voice as the Secret Seekers listened behind the walls. Vassovich looking at his watch, timed a similar looking one. And fixed it on the UFO. Leaving the UFO in the garage, he went back in.

DASHING THE PLAN

Ralph tried a joke to ease the tension. "Shut up Ralph, this is serious," said Pooja. Suddenly





Vipul rang his BSA SLR's bell as he always did when he got an idea. "Hey, why don't we...", and the others nodded in excitement.

Vipul disappeared behind the wall. After an eternity he was back, smiling mysteriously. Parking their BSA SLRs, they waited. At 4.15 a.m. Vassovich came out and headed for the Richman Cliffs.

The windier, bumpier route to the cliff top was easy on their BSA SLRs.



A triumphant ring of their BSA SLRs and a startled Vassovich was soon overpowered.

Vipul waved his wrist with glee before Vassovich's eyes. "Youuuu", screamed Vassovich.

Guess how New City was saved?



of The Mad Vassovich

THE MISSION ACCOMPLISHED

On top, Vassovich had already positioned his UFO. On the dot of 5.00, he switched on the remote. Nothing happened. The Secret Seekers smiled.

5.05 a.m. mission successful.

To know whether Mad Vassovich succeeded, read "The Mystery of the Star-Crossed Shoe." So long... Happy cycling on your BSA SLR.



BSA SLR

Get Set'n'Go on an adventure



AN APPEAL TO OUR READERS, SUBSCRIBERS, AGENTS

The cover price of all editions of CHANDAMAMA had remained Rs. 3-00 for the last three years, despite the ever mounting costs of production consequent upon the periodical and abnormal increase in the price of newsprint. Because of reasons beyond our control, we are constrained to raise the cover price to Rs. 4-00 (annual subscription Rs. 48-00) from the July 1991 issue. However, there will be no reduction in the number of pages or the variety of features which will continue to hold your attention. We appeal to everyone concerned to bear with us.


— Publisher





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CHANDAMAMA

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And News Flash, Let Us Know
and More!

NEXT ISSUE

Vol. 22 July 1991 No. 1.

THE PRINCESS AND THE WIZARD: After some initial adventures, Apurva, ~~leave~~ for a change. His creator, the yogi, agrees but warns him that by nature he is destined to go to the help of people in distress. The princess of Ratnapur, for instance. Nobody is able to cure her of her illness. A wizard conspires with his assistant, in **ADVENTURES OF APURVA**.

A MIGHTY LEAP: It's now almost certain that Sita Devi is in Lanka. But how does one reach there? The Vanaras face a fresh problem. Who can reach there? Silence greets Angada's anxious query. Jambavan has the answer in **VEER HANUMAN**.

Bujjal's brush goes on to make the **PANCHATANTRA** stories more colourful.

All the regular features take their usual place.

Printed by B.V. REDDI at Prasad Process Private Ltd, 188 N.S.K. Salai, Madras 600 026 (India) and published by B. VISWANATHA REDDI on behalf of CHANDAMAMA PUBLICATIONS, Chandamama Buildings, Vadapalani, Madras 600 026 (India). The stories, articles and designs contained herein are the exclusive property of the publishers and copying or adapting them in any manner will be dealt with according to law.



Controlling Editor:
NAGI



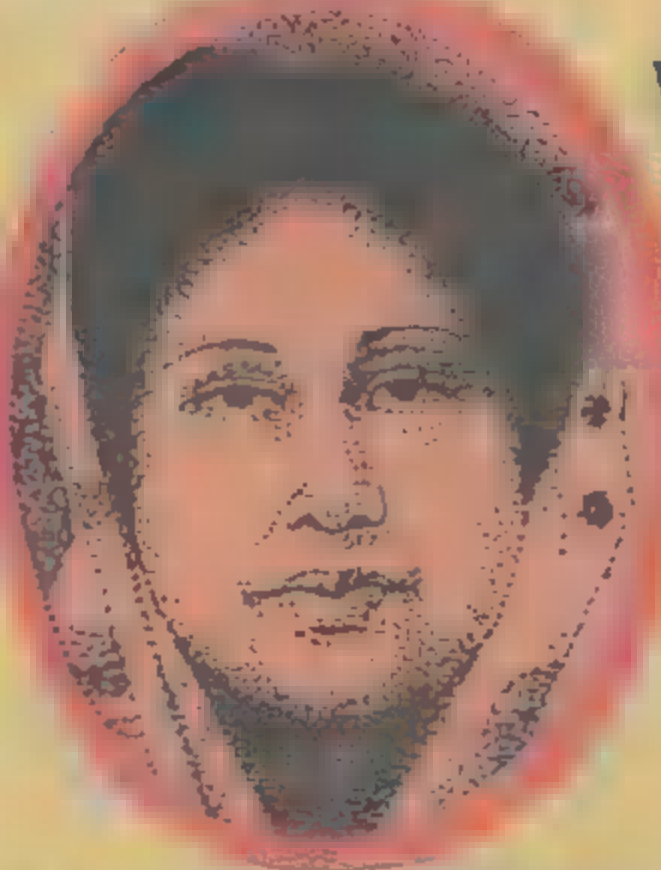
Founder:
CHAKRAPANI

POWER WITH PEOPLE

The first half of 1991 has seen the conclusion of two major exercises involving the people of India. The once-in-ten-years operation called the Census ended in March, revealing a 23.5 per cent increase in our population since 1981. With its 84.39 crore inhabitants, India is the second most populated country, compared to China with its 116 crores.

Though once-a-decade event, a lot of planning and preparation go behind this 'counting of heads'. On the contrary, a mid-term election is the result of sudden, sometimes unavoidable, political developments. The four-month-old Chandrasekhar ministry at the Centre found itself shaky and decided on mid-term polls for the sake of a stable government.

By the time this issue is in your hands, new governments at the Centre and in some States would have been formed. The debate whether the country really needed these elections so soon after the 1989 General Elections may continue for a long time, while the power rests with the people to ensure that these governments remained stable for the next five years.



Woman P.M. for Bangladesh

It is now the turn of Bangladesh to have a woman Prime Minister. Three other countries of the Indian sub-continent had had women as heads of government earlier.

Sirimavo Bandaranaike became the Prime Minister of Sri Lanka in 1960 following the assassination of her husband, Prime Minister S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike, the previous year. The world's first woman Prime Minister, Sirimavo ruled the country for 17 years and had the good fortune of having a woman as her counterpart in India.

Indira Gandhi was a Cabinet Minister at the time Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri

away suddenly in 1966. On her election as the leader of the ruling Congress Party in the Lok Sabha, she succeeded him as Prime Minister. After two terms, her party was defeated in the elections in 1977, but she came back to power in two years and remained the undisputed leader till she fell a victim to an assassin in 1984.

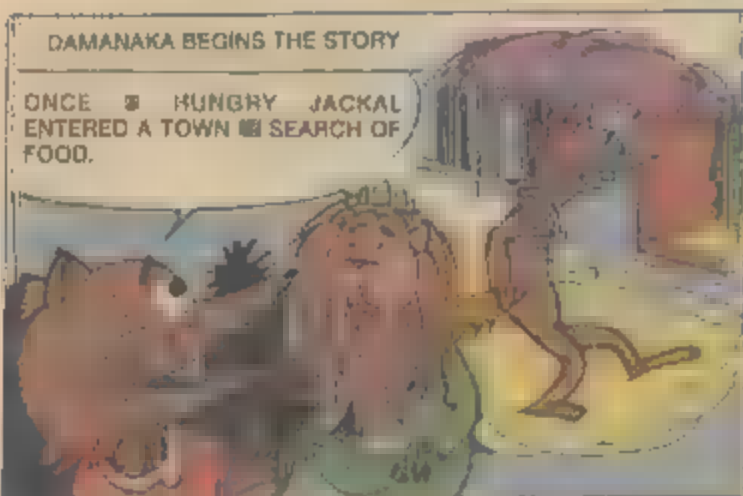
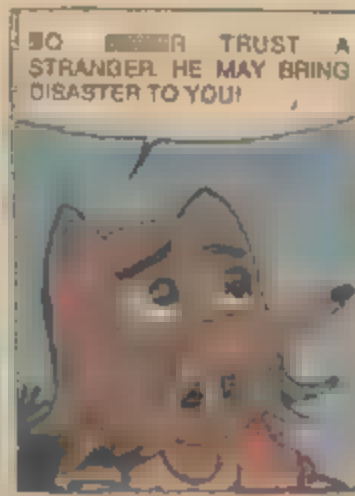
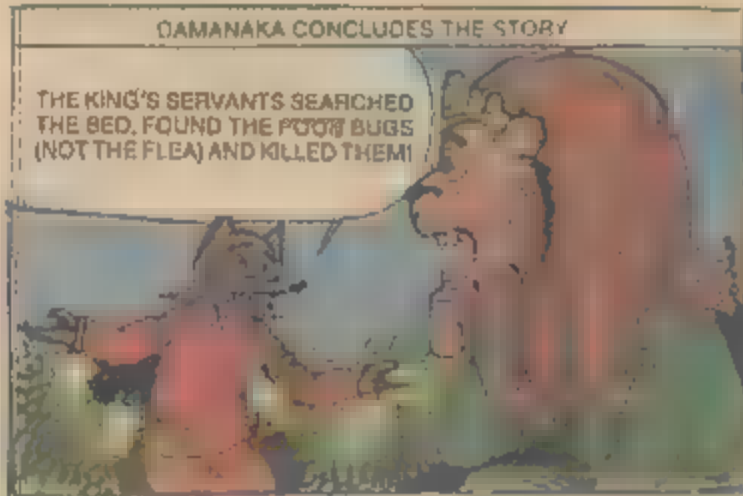
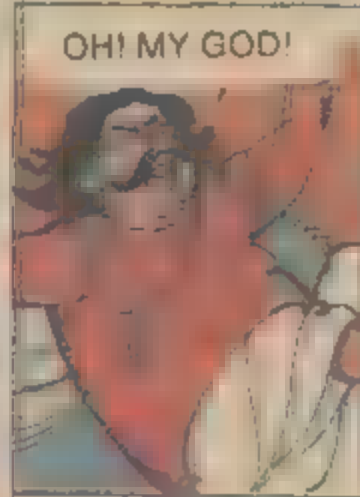
It was during Indira Gandhi's rule that India went to help liberate East Pakistan, which was reborn as the independent Bangladesh. In the truncated Pakistan, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto became the Prime Minister first and, when President Yahya Khan left the country in disgrace, he was elevated as the President. However, he was overthrown in the next five years and, after a trial, was hanged. His daughter Benazir Bhutto, immediately chose for herself a political career. In the 1985 elections, her Pakistan People's Party was returned to power, and she

became Prime Minister. However, the PPP lost in the 1990 elections.

Bangladesh's first Prime Minister, Sheikh Mujibur Rehman, became President in 1975, but ■■■■ assassinated in less than six months. After that, the country witnessed a coup, one after another. One such coup saw the installation of General Ershad ■■■■ President who, for eight years, delayed elections. After his resignation in 1990 as a result of public clamour, elections took place and the Bangladesh

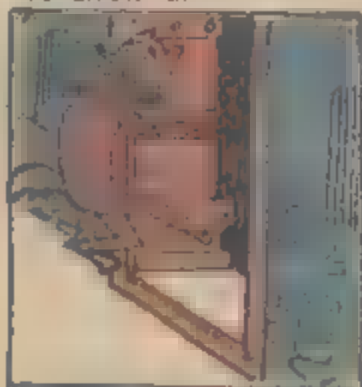
National Party, led by Begum Khaleda Zia, emerged as the largest single party. When the parliament, Jatiya Sangsad, met on April 5, she took her place ■■■■ Prime Minister. Waiting in the wings, so to say, in neighbouring Burma, now called Myanmar, is the India educated daughter of the assassinated leader, the once popular Aung San, whose party won the long awaited elections last year. But the Burmese President is yet to give the green signal for the formation of a democratic government.





अपराधो न मेअस्तीति नैतद् विश्वासकारणम् ।
विद्यते हि नृशंसेभ्यो भयं गुणवतामपि ॥

THE FRIGHTENED JACKAL
RUSHED INTO A HUT [REDACTED]
A DYER STAYED...



... AND FELL INTO A TUB OF
COLOUR!!



MY GOD! I'VE FALLEN INTO
A TUB OF INDIGO! [REDACTED] BLUE
ALL OVER!



BUT I'VE SCARED AWAY [REDACTED]
DOGS! HAI HAI!



THE BLUE JACKAL CROPT
INTO THE FOREST!



OH! I'M HUNGRY!

WHO IS THAT STRANGE
CREATURE?



WHERE HAS HE COME FROM?

MAY BE FROM SOME [REDACTED]
WORLD!

LET'S RUN AWAY FROM THIS
FOREST!



AHA! AHA! THOSE SILLY
CREATURES ARE AFRAID OF
ME. WONDERFUL! I NOW
HAVE AN IDEA!



MY DEAR FELLOWS! DON'T
[REDACTED] AWAY! I WON'T HARM
YOU!



COME! COME NEAR ME,
I WON'T HARM YOU!



A person should not rest assured that he is safe because
he has done no harm to anybody. Even the virtuous has to
dread the wicked.

INDRA, THE LORD OF HEAVEN,
HAS APPOINTED ME YOUR
KING I SHALL PROTECT YOU



O! MERCIFUL KING! WE
SHALL SERVE YOU



NOW, YOU BE MY CHIEF
MASTER

AND YOU—MY BODYGUARD!

YOU—THE DOOR-KEEPER
AND YOU—MY CHAMBERLAIN!



I HATE THE JACKALS THE MOST.
DRIVE THEM AWAY FROM MY
FOREST!



NOW, YOU CAN ALL SERVE
ME



THEREAFTER THE BLUE
JACKAL ENJOYED ALL ROYAL
PLEASURES AND POMP



AFTER A 300 DAYS—A PACK
OF JACKALS WANDERED INTO
THE 3000 UNNOTICED



AFTER SOMETIME

HOO! HOOO! HOOO!



THE JACKAL KING HEARD HIS
KINGDAEN'S HOWL

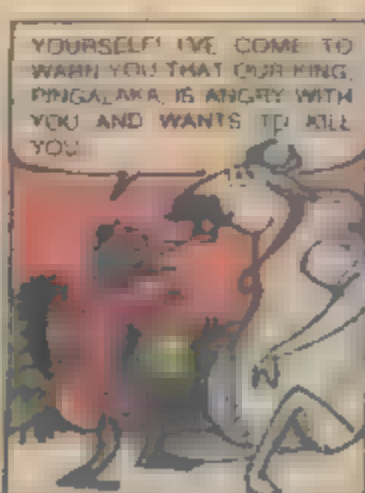
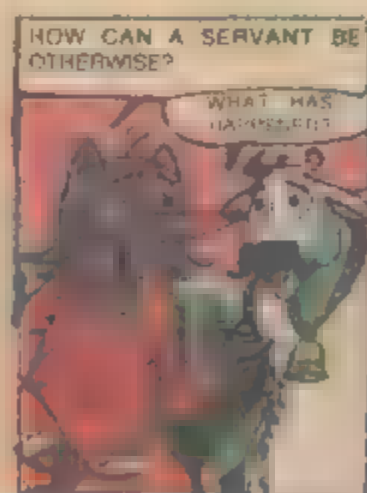
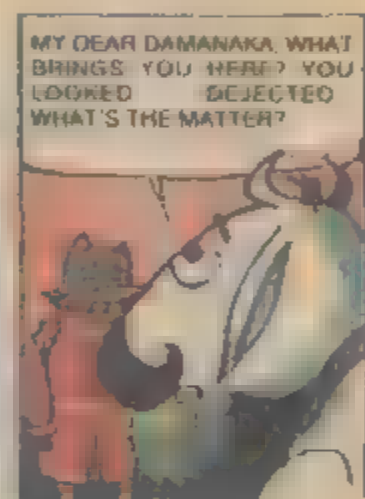
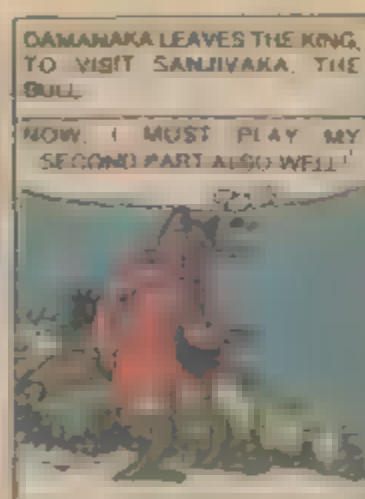
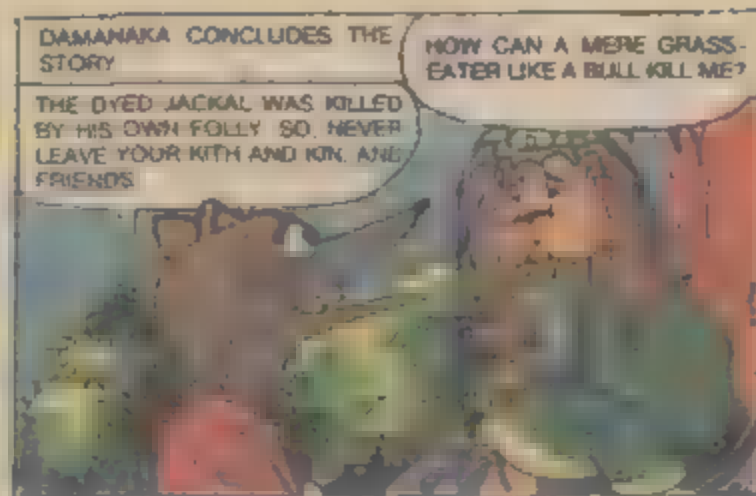
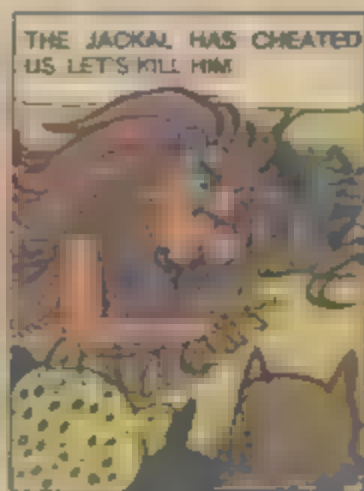
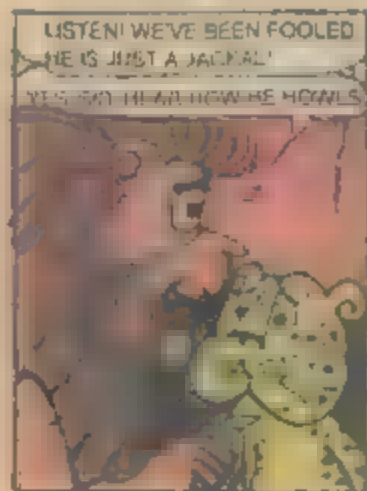
HOW IT THRILLS ME AFTER
SUCH A LONG TIME! HOW CAN
I RESIST!



HOO! WOOSH! HOO!



सुजनो न याति वैरं परहितनिरतो विनाशकालेऽपि ।
छेदेऽपि चन्दनतरुः सुरभयति मुखं कुठारस्य ॥



A noble soul does not refrain from doing good to others
even when he is himself being ruined. The sandal tree
perfumes the edge of the very axe which fells it

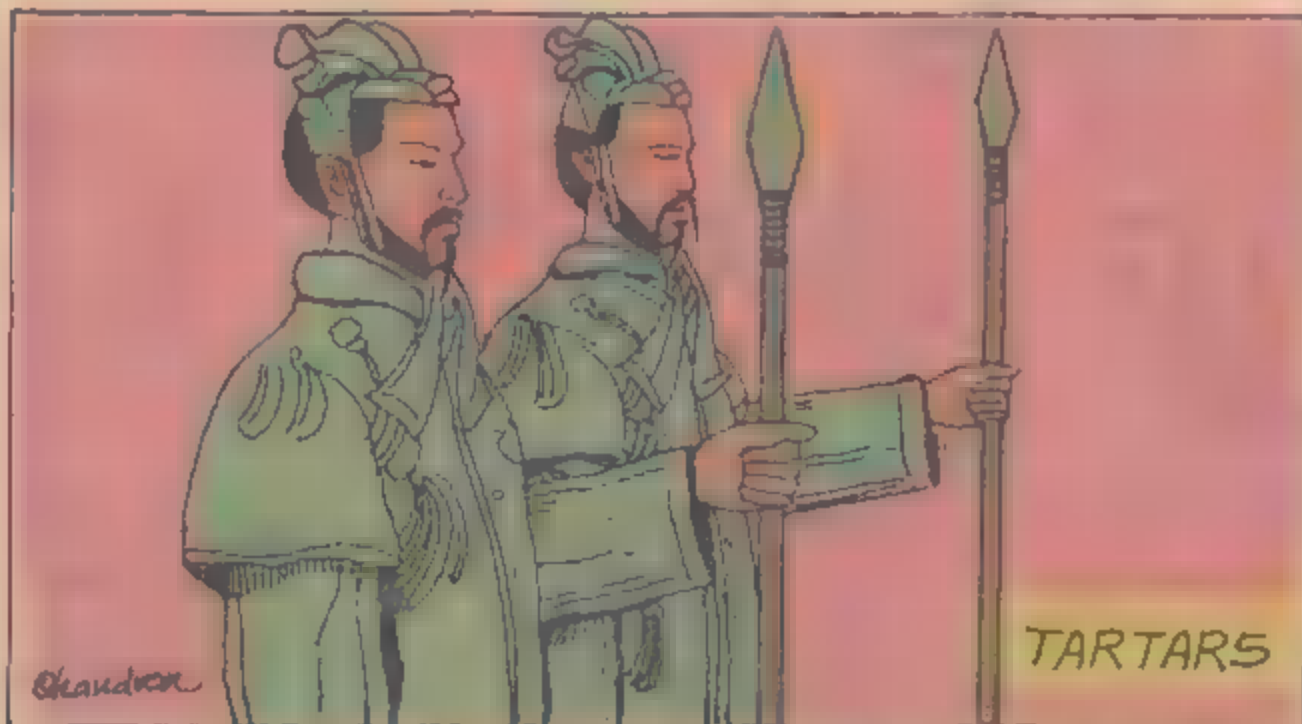
OF TARTARS AND IVORY TOWER

Jyotiranjana Biswal of Durgapur asks: What is meant by the phrase "to catch a Tartar"?

Tartars, also known as Jatars, were once the tribal soldiers who helped China extend its empire to Mongolia in the east to Turkey in the west and to Siberia in the north. By and by, the word Tartar came to be used for a formidable, rough, unmanageable person. If you were to catch a Tartar, you can be rest assured, you have got hold of someone who can be neither controlled nor got rid of. More than 300 years ago, Dryden in *Kind Keeper* wrote: "What a Tartar have I caught!" The British suspicion of the Russian character gave birth to a proverb: "Scratch a Russian and you'll find a Tartar." Used without a capital, tartar means one who unexpectedly turns the tables on his assailant.

Who is an "ivory tower personality"? asks Surajit Kumar of Mahadevpur, Arunachal Pradesh.

As Ivory is a precious material, being the hard, white substance forming the tusks of animals like the elephant, hippopotamus, and the walrus, a whole tower made of ivory is unimaginable, something far from reality. Used figuratively, an ivory tower is a place of retreat from the world or from one's fellows, chosen by only a recluse, who is characterised by an attitude of remoteness from or disdain for practical affairs.





4

(Apurva, a tiny human being with supernatural powers and the mind of an angel, emerges from some fire-rites performed by a Yogi in the Himalayas. After saving some villagers from a crisis, he rescues a young village boy, Samir, from the clutches of a gang of bandits. The king would spare their lives only if some miracle is seen).

There was dead silence in the dark chamber in which the bandits were kept. Then one of them was heard sobbing. "Do you believe the king will spare our lives?" he asked another bandit.

"Only if God is kind to us, we will be saved!" replied his friend.

"Don't lament like cowards!" shouted their leader, Bhaloo Sardar.

"Don't yell!" two or three bandits snubbed Bhaloo. "What have we been all these years if not cowards? To pounce upon unsuspecting travellers, to kidnap helpless boys, to plunder the households of ■■■■ when they

PROVIDENCE PLAYS A ROLE



were unable to oppose us, to terrorise people—what are these if not cowardice? To enjoy life with the money earned by our victims with their hard labour—what is this if not cowardice and shamelessness? Bhaloo Saradar, you've taught us to be nothing but cowards. How dare you now accuse us of cowardice?"

Bhaloo Sardar kept quiet.

But the charming voice they had heard once before, spoke to them again. "Bandits! You're speaking ■ if you were merely kids! Do not deceive yourselves. You chaps followed Bhaloo Sardar with the full knowledge of

what you were doing. You've been criminals. That's why you deserve to be punished. That's plain and simple."

Now the bandits, too, kept quiet.

After a while, Bhaloo Sardar said, "O Angel, are you going to ■ us? I understand from the guards that the date for our hanging has already been announced!"

"I can't say anything except advising you to pray to God for His mercy," said Apurva.

* * *

There was widespread jubilation among the people of the land. They heaved sighs of relief at the capture of the notorious gang. The day for the hanging of the bandits was announced. It was to take place in the morning, ■ the usual place of execution outside the town. There was an earthen mound on which had been set up the scaffold. The noose hung from the upper bar of the scaffold.

The townsfolk began to collect in front of the mound even before sunrise. Hundreds of them lined along the road between the prison and the gallows.

Soon after sunrise, the bandits,

in chains, were led through the streets. Soldiers walked ahead of them, behind them, and also flanking them. The king's Kotwal rode in front of the procession, his horse trotting slowly.

While many in the crowd looked on with mere amazement, some of them cursed the bandits. Needless to say, they had suffered at the hands of the bandits.

"You rogue! You murderer! You villain!" cried a woman as she broke forward from the crowd and spat on Bhaloo Sardar's face. "This brute and his gang stopped my husband and some other men when they were returning from a distant town. The fellow tried to snatch my husband's purse, but wielding his lathi, my husband broke the limbs of half a dozen of the bandits. He gave a chance to the others following him to escape. They told me how my husband waved his lathi putting an invisible shield around himself. What did the coward Bhaloo do? Unable to approach my husband, the rogue retreated and then started shooting arrows at him. But my husband played his lathi so swiftly around himself that the arrows were repulsed. They



broke and rebounded. At last, only when my husband was extremely tired and the movement of his lathi slightly slowed down that the rogue's arrow pierced his chest. He fell dead and this shameless thief stole his purse from his body!"

"Shame, shame!" cried out the crowd and some of them pressed forward to lay their hands on Bhaloo.

The Kotwal turned his horse and looked towards the crowd and said loudly, "My brothers and sisters, I can understand your wrath. But it's not proper to wreak vengeance on men who are



walking the streets for the last time, with death for their destination. Be patient. Let them pray in peace for the last few minutes of their life."

The crowd quietened down.

"Mother!" said a tearful Bhaloo Sardar, raising his chained hands above his head. "Mother, I'm a sinner. I've killed so many husbands, sons, fathers, and brothers. But, don't worry, a little while from now, I'll be on my way to hell. But I've to pass through different worlds. It's possible that I'll meet the souls of those whom I've sent to those worlds. Providence might have

given them a free hand to torment me. After that, I'll plunge into the pitch-dark hell and suffer there, God knows for what length of time."

"Alas, we deserve to suffer!" cried his followers in chorus.

"Whip us—whichever among you would like do so. I'll request the Kotwal to allow you to do so," said one of the bandits.

The crowd, of course, did not do any such thing. The woman, who had spat on Bhaloo, now sobbed.

"Bhaloo! You're repenting, and that's a good sign, I wish I could obtain pardon for you. But, you know, you've been too bad to deserve any kindness. Samir, that sweet boy whom you were going to butcher, pleaded for your life. But the king would not relent. What can be done?" the Kotwal told the bandit chief.

"I know, nothing can be done at this eleventh hour. We've to die. However, can't you get pardon for my followers? I'm prepared to suffer death a hundred times! I alone am responsible for all the crimes," said Bhaloo Sardar.

The Kotwal laughed. "None can alter the king's decision. Now

it's too late to make any fresh appeal to him. Sorry, Bhaloo, I don't wish to give any false consolation to you. All of you have to climb the gallows!" he said.

The procession at last reached the mound. The bandits were led onto it. They were about twenty in all. The Kotwal asked the hangman, "Are you set for the exercise?"

"All set, Sir," replied the hangman.

"Good. Now, hang the leader, Bhaloo Sardar, first."

"Your order shall be obeyed, Sir."

The hangman's assistant took hold of Bhaloo Sardar and led him to the scaffold.

"Bhaloo! Say your last prayers," the Kotwal commanded.

"I seek the pardon of God and of all those who have died or suffered on account of me," mumbled Bhaloo Sardar.

The hangman made Bhaloo Sardar take his position and then put the noose around his neck. The crowd below the mound stood with bated breath.

"I shall count up to ten. As soon as I say ten, pull the rope. Is that clear?" asked the Kotwal.



"All right, Sir."

The Kotwal began counting. The crowd was tense. There was fear mixed with excitement in them. By now the sun had risen for enough light to fall on the scaffold. The strong rope, smeared with oil for a smooth action, glistened in the sunlight.

"Eight!" said the Kotwal.

The hangman's grip on the rope became firm.

"Nine!"

Some of the bandits standing in a row behind the scaffold broke down.

"Ten!!"

The hangman pulled the rope



with a jerk. The body of Bhaloo Sardar was to go up. Instead, he slightly slumped and the rope was seen snapped!

"What's this!" shrieked the Kotwal. The hangman stood speechless. Such a thing had never happened. He had executed so many people, but this was a new experience.

The deputy Kotwal and two other officials, who were at the foot of the mound, now climbed the mound. "Did you examine the rope carefully?" they demanded of the hangman.

"Most thoroughly!" said the hangman, who had now reco-

vered his wits.

"Do it again!" ordered the Kotwal.

The rope was changed. The new piece of rope was checked by all the officials present. Then it was fastened to the gallows. The Kotwal once again began counting. As he uttered the last number, the hangman pulled the rope. Both the Kotwal and his deputy stood close to him.

Lo! The rope snapped again.

After a spell of sepulchral silence, the Kotwal said, "This is something supernatural. I must hasten to inform the king about it. Wait till I return. Meanwhile, fix a new rope."

The Kotwal galloped away, but when he returned, the king as well as several courtiers, were with him.

The king himself went up and checked the rope this time. The noose was duly put around Bhaloo's neck.

The Kotwal began counting.

"Ten!"

The rope snapped again!

This time some people in the audience could not check themselves, and gave vent to their amazement.

"Hm!" said the king gravely.





"I had told Samir that if Providence wants to save these rogues, there must take place some miracle. Now the miracle has been witnessed. How can the rope snap three times for no reason? Set the criminal free. I grant him and his followers pardon! But they must begin living a new life under our supervision."

The crowd applauded the king's decision. The chains were removed from the hands of the bandits. They fell at the king's feet.

"Offer your gratitude to the unseen Power that saved you. Prove yourselves worthy of His mercy!" said the king. The crowd

burst into shouts of praise for the king.

"How did that miracle happen?" Samir asked Apurva in the solitude of the forest.

"You know, when I run very fast. I grow invisible to others. I took position at a suitable distance and began running every time the Kotwal reached five in his counting. When I would come near the mound, I would have gathered enough speed to grow invisible. And reaching the scaffold I would jump up and cut the rope with my sword and continue to run in the opposite direction!" explained Apurva.

—To continue

The tree is not to be judged by its bark.

Don't trouble trouble until trouble troubles you.



Vikram and the Vampire

SELF, AND SELF ALONE

Dark was the night and weird the atmosphere. It rained from time to time. Gusts of wind shook the trees. Between thunderclaps and the howls of jackals could be heard the eerie laughter of spirits. Flashes of lightning showed up fearsome faces here and there.

But King Vikramaditya did not swerve a bit. He climbed the old tree once again and brought the corpse down. However, as soon ■ he began crossing the desolate cremation ground, with the corpse lying on his shoulder, the vampire that possessed the corpse spoke: "O King! Your valour is to be highly admired. I've no idea what your goal is. But for achieving it, you've forgotten your kingly comforts; you're even willing to risk your life. Very few can do this. But, are you sure you can keep up your spirit forever? May be if you hear the story of



Bhoopalan, you may change your attitude."

The vampire began the story: Bhoopalan was a village officer. His duties necessitated official visits even to nearby kingdoms. Everywhere he would be received with honours befitting an official and was always sent back with gifts. Once he had to visit Alakapuri, a kingdom as beautiful as its name spelt out and where everyone wished to go at least once in his lifetime. So, four of his rich acquaintances went to him as soon as they heard the news of his impending journey. Now, his being a purely official visit.

Bhoopalan was naturally in a dilemma. Apologetically, he told them, "Look here, I'm going on an official visit, and you can't expect that the same facilities for boarding and lodging would be available to you."

"No certainly not; we don't expect any such thing, and we would try not to cause any inconvenience to you. Just allow us to travel with you, that's all what we ask for," they assured him.

On reaching Alakapuri, they were greeted by a representative of the king. He was at his wit's end when he saw that Bhoopalan was not alone. "Sir," he said falteringly, "we had made arrangements for your stay only; if we take your honoured companions, they may be put to inconvenience. Let me, therefore, go and see how they, too, can be accommodated."

The four friends knew that they were getting a red carpet treatment only because of Bhoopalan. They expressed their gratitude and were all praise for him. During their stay in Alakapuri, one day they accompanied Bhoopalan to a diamond merchant's shop. He made some

purchases and the merchant was so happy that he presented him with a diamond ring. His friends were not left out and they, too, were given two precious stones each.

Another day, a leading merchant of the place, who had heard of Bhoopalan's interest in music, arranged a concert in his honour. No sooner had the artistes concluded their recital than the four friends went up the stage to compliment the artistes. "Oh, your kingdom seems to abound in music-lovers!" commented the host to Bhoopalan.

Prior to their departure from Alakapuri, Bhoopalan and his friends visited the Durga temple there. Unfortunately, the king's representative was unable to go with them and had sent someone else to escort them. As they came out after offering their prayers, it began to rain. The attendant, Rengan, had one umbrella with him and so he could take care of only Bhoopalan. The others were drenched to their bones.

As Bhoopalan bid farewell, the people of Alakapuri showered him with gifts. They did not forget his friends. The four of them were mightily pleased and



disclosed to him that they had brought some valuable mementoes with them, but did not know who they should honour in their turn.

Bhoopalan was not very happy with the situation. "It is not proper for us to offer gifts to officials and merchants. You may, therefore, give something to the attendant, Rengan."

As they were nearing home, the youngest of the four friends turned to Bhoopalan. "Sir, may we look forward to more opportunities like this, to go with you?"

Bhoopalan was irritated, but controlled his anger. Before he



could react, the seniormost among the four checked the youngster. "Be satisfied with what you've achieved," he said. "It's not proper for an officer to take his friends along whenever and wherever he goes — especially for official work. Let's be grateful to him now, and see that we don't bother him again."

The vampire ended the narration and asked Vikram: "What made the elder to comment like that? Wasn't that remark particularly aimed at someone? If you don't answer to my satisfaction, be sure that your head will blow up into pieces!"

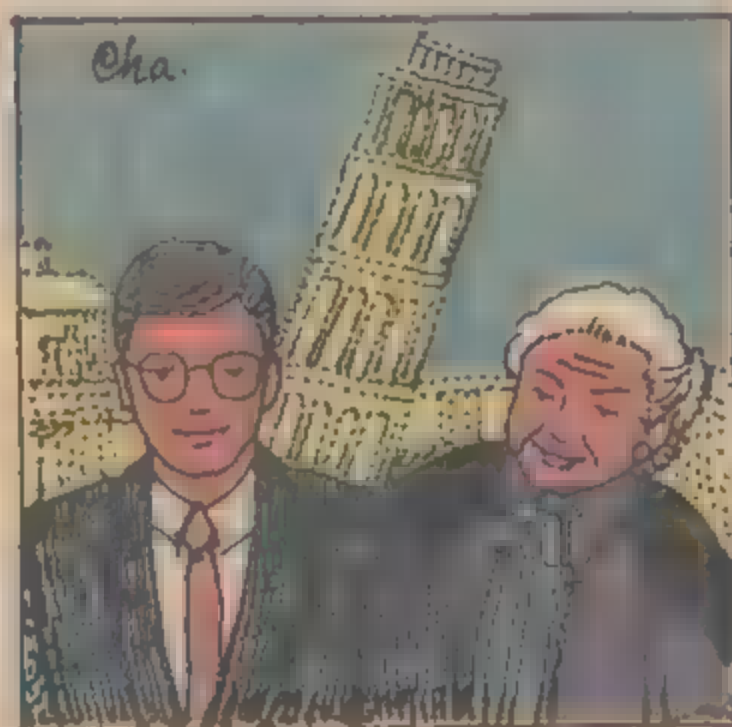
King Vikramaditya took some time to answer the vampire. "Right from the beginning, Bhoopalan wanted to be left to himself. But he had no other option except to take the friends along. He was upset when he saw that they were being honoured because of his presence with them. That's why he belittled their desire to reciprocate and suggested that the gifts they had brought with them be given to the attendant who, after all, was only a servant. The seniormost among the four friends could see through Bhoopalan's game. People like him are selfish and do not wish to be of any help even to their friends. Such people may even try to dissuade their friends from going to the help of others. They would want to corner all honour and glory for themselves and not wish to share them with others. It is narrow-mindedness," said Vikram, recalling what had happened to someone who observed penance for long. "The lord appeared to him and asked him what boon he wanted. Without batting an eyelid, he expressed to have everything he desired. The lord agreed, but on one condition: whatever he asked



for, his neighbour would get the same in double quantity! The greedy one was in a dilemma. Suppose, instead of receiving something, he were to wish for losing something? he queried to the lord, who replied in that case the neighbour would lose twice that much. The man was really happy, and said he would like to

lose one eye! So that his neighbour would lose both the eyes! Wasn't Bhoopalan such a person?" asked King Vikramaditya to the vampire.

The vampire realised that he had been outwitted and gave the slip to the king once again, taking with him the corpse lying on Vikram's shoulders.



THE SAME CONTRACTOR!

"This is the Leaning Tower of Pisa!" announced the guide.

"What? I did not catch the name," murmured the tourist, an elderly lady.

"The Leaning Tower of Pisa!"

"I still don't catch it. But never mind, this must have been the work of the same fellow who built our garage!" commented the elderly lady with a sigh.

THE REWARD

King Raj Varma once rewarded a village watchman with a gold ring because he had caught a notorious bandit. The watchman was happy.

One day a retired principal of the Vedic college saw a burglar snatching a silver chain from a little boy's neck. He ran after the burglar while shouting 'Thief!' Passers-by followed his direction and caught the burglar. The king rewarded the old man with his bejewelled necklace.

Later a courtier asked the king, "My lord, if you rewarded the watchman with only a ring although he caught a notorious bandit, why did you reward the old man with a much more precious thing for his helping to capture a small burglar?"

The king smiled and asked, "What is the purpose of a reward?"

"To make the recipient happy," said the courtier.

"That is right. It is the watchman's duty to catch thieves and bandits. He is regularly paid for that. The reward of a ring was added encouragement for him. It required extraordinary effort of duty on the part of an old man—who had not retired as a police officer but is a scholar—to help capture a thief. His status, his age as well as his action as an ideal citizen entitled him to a greater reward," explained the king.

"How right you are, my lord!" said the courtier.



CHANDAMAMA SUPPLEMENT-32

INDIA OF THEIR DREAMS

DIVISION WAS NO SOLUTION

Born in 1888, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad was a brave freedom-fighter and a national leader who commanded great respect. He was the President of Indian National Congress during 1940-46, an important phase of India's history. He was India's Minister of Education till his death in 1958.

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad was opposed to the partition of India. In 1946, he wrote, pointing out the blunder this great country would commit if it allowed itself to be divided into two States: "Two States confronting one another, offer no solution to the problem of one another's minorities, but only lead to retribution and reprisals by introducing a system of mutual hostages. The scheme of Pakistan therefore solves no problem for the Muslims... I am one of those who considers the present chapter of communal bitterness and differences as a transient phase in Indian life. I firmly hold that they will disappear when India assumes the responsibility of her own destiny. I am reminded of a saying of Mr. Gladstone that the best cure for a man's fear of the water was to throw him into it. Similarly India must assume responsibilities and administer her own affairs before fears and suspicions can be fully allayed."

Had the Maulana's advice been followed, we would have had a much peaceful continent.

DO YOU KNOW?

1. "He tumbled into life, and tumbled out of it." Who was historian Lane Poole referring to?
2. Where are located the deepest mine pits in the world?
3. What is the peculiarity of the Bombay Duck?
4. When and where did the Parsis first arrive in India?
5. Which is the largest fresh water lake in India?



SARASWATI

The banks of the sacred river Saraswati were the abode of the ancient Rishis. They were inspired to compose their immortal hymns there. They believed that the great goddess who sent them such creative and spiritual inspirations, was also flowing as the beneficent river.

Goddess Saraswati is *Vagdevi*,

the Goddess of Speech. She is believed to have emerged from the mouth of the Supreme Lord. She is worshipped as the Deity of learning and knowledge, as one who enlightens our mind and heart.

Dressed in white, she appears riding a swan. She holds a Veena and a book.

The river Saraswati meets the Ganga and the Yamuna at

Prayag, near Allahabad, but the flow of her water is underground.

A Record Number of Wars

The Gulf war has ended, much to the relief of people over the world. According to a statistician in Norway, it was the 14,531st war recorded in history in the last 5,560 years. That works out to a little over 2.5 wars per year—enough for everyone to hate war!



NEWS FLASH



First Translation of the Ramayana from the U.S.

For the first time, Valmiki's *Ramayana* is being translated into English in the U.S.A. The work, started twelve years ago, is being handled by five Sanskrit scholars attached to three universities. The third volume has just been published by Princeton University, and also a paperback edition of the first volume. Four more volumes will complete the project, which is based on a critical Sanskrit edition of the epic published in Baroda 25 years ago.

LET US EXPLORE THE WORLD OF LITERATURE

1. How long was Robinson Crusoe marooned on an island?
2. "Full Circle" is the title of an autobiography. Who wrote it?
3. "The Past Masters" and "A P.M. on P.M.s" are the titles of two books written by two British Prime Ministers with similar first names. Who were they?
4. "All's well that ends well" is the title of a Shakespearean play. It was also the original name given to a famous novel by its Russian writer. Name the book and its author.
5. "It is a far, far better thing that I do than I have ever done; it is a far, far better rest that I go to than I have ever known." Famous last sentences in a famous novel. Which book? Who wrote it?

ANSWERS

YOU KNOW?

1. Humayun. He was miraculously cured of an illness when he was a baby; and he died when he fell down the stairs.
2. The Kolar Gold Fields, 96 km from Bangalore.
3. It is a fish, not a bird!
4. In Gujarat, in 760 A.D., when they sought refuge from forcible conversion to Islam.

5. The Wular, in the Kashmir Valley.


LITERATURE

1. 28 years 2 months 19 days.
2. Sir Anthony Eden.
3. Harold Macmillan and Harold Wilson.
4. "War and Peace" by Leo Tolstoy.
5. "A Tale of Two Cities" by Charles Dickens.


Note: The highest waterfall in the world (page 33, May 1991) is the Salto Angel (979m) in Venezuela. It has a single drop of 807m. The Jog Falls is the highest in Asia.

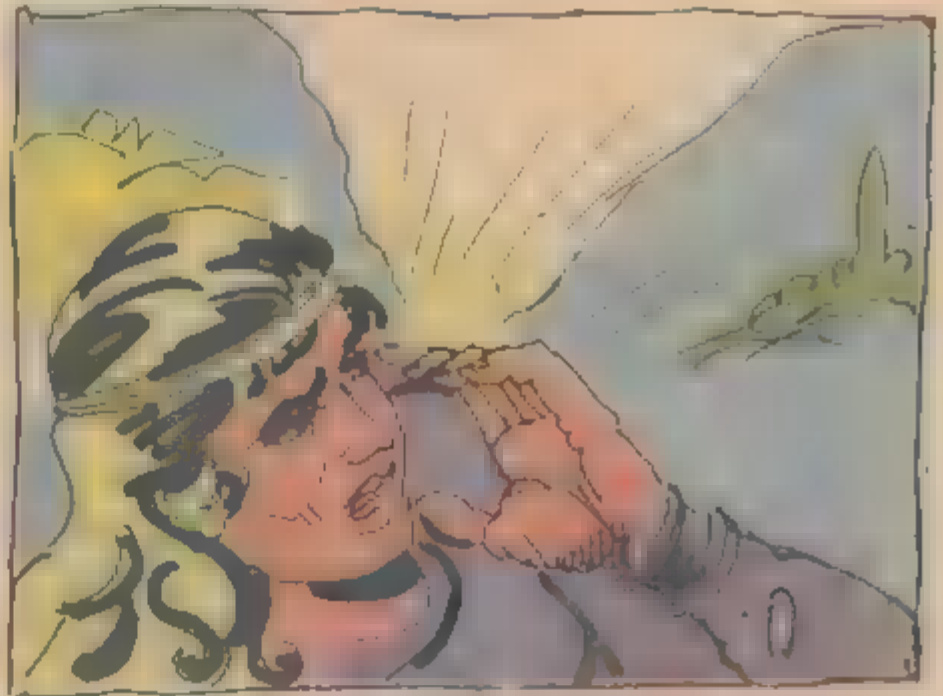
WORLD MYTHOLOGY


HOW LEARNT AGRICULTURE

Pluto, the god and the king of Tartarus, the nether-world, was once charmed by a goddess, Proserpine.  forcibly carried her away into his domain underground, by striking his trident on the bed of the river Cyane.



When Proserpine's mother, Ceres,  back home and did not find her daughter, she looked for her everywhere—in the dales, valleys, hills and in the wide wide fields. But to no avail.



Disappointed, Ceres sat down on a rock. She assumed the figure of an  woman. Nine days and nine nights she sat like that. At last she was noticed by a poor man named Celeus and his little daughter. "Come to our hut," they requested her.



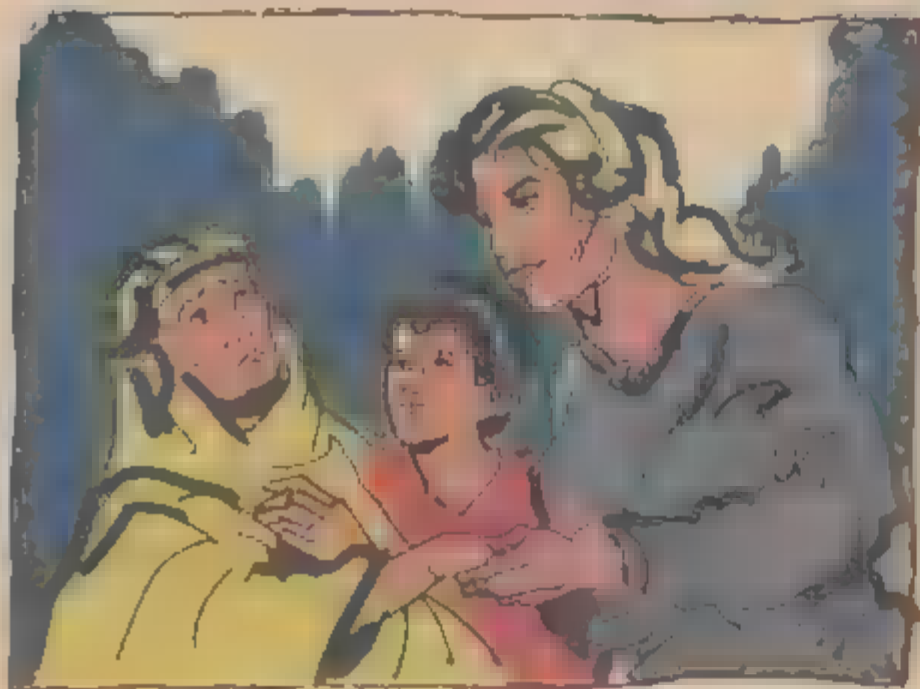
Goddess Ceres, impressed by the kindness of the man and his daughter followed them. On their way, the man told her how his little [redacted] was lying sick for a long time and that he had, given up hope of his life.


Goddess Ceres, still looking like an ordinary [redacted] woman, saw the sick boy and kissed him. At once the lustre of life returned to the boy's face. He smiled, imagine the surprise of the boy's parents and sister at this miracle!




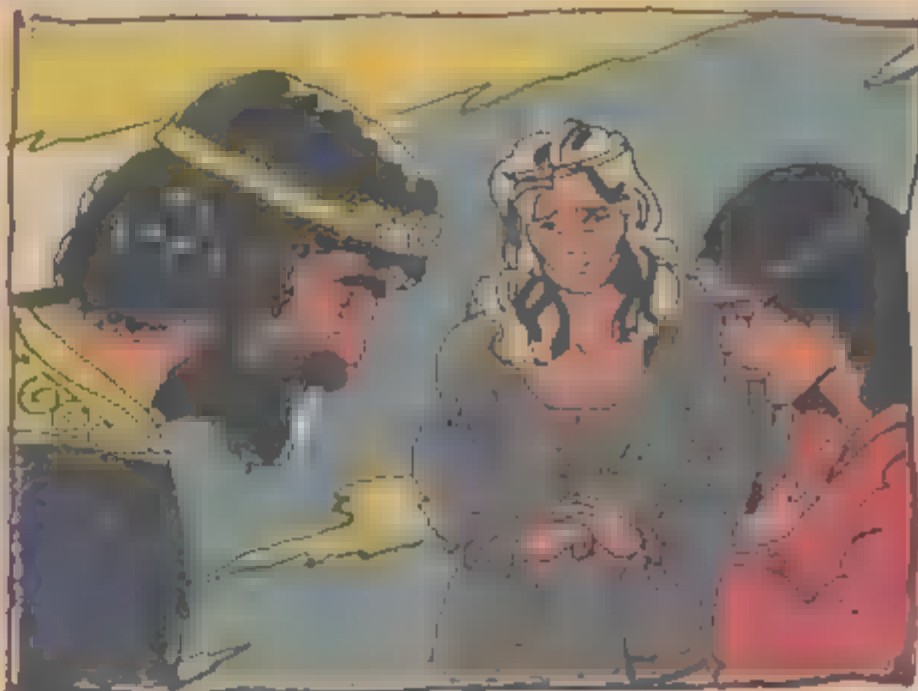
But a greater surprise awaited the boy's mother. At night, when all had gone to bed, Ceres rose and lifted the boy and chanted some hymns on him. The boy's mother [redacted] awake and she was watching all this in silence.

When Goddess Ceres put the boy on a bed of ashes, his mother was alarmed. What is the stranger going to do with her child? She shrieked and rushed out of her bed and dragged her son from the ashes.



Goddess Ceres calmly told the boy's mother, "Had you shown a  patience, I would have made your son immortal. But you spoilt the rite. However, your son would grow up to be brave and noble and he would do good to the people."

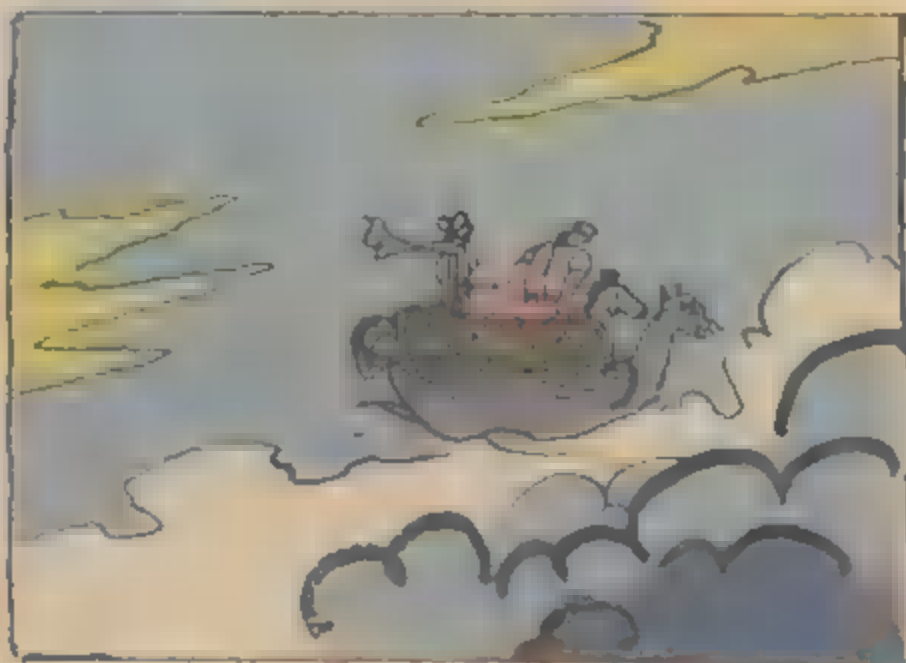
Goddess Ceres went away. After some further search, she found out that her daughter, Proserpine had married Pluto and had become the queen of Tartarus. She reconciles to the situation and is  more in anguish.





Years passed Goddess Ceres did not forget the poor man's family. The boy, known as Triptolemus, was a young man. The goddess visited him and taught him the use of plough and also the art of sowing seeds, making him the world's first farmer.

She took the young man in her chariot drawn by winged dragons to different lands, so that he could teach the art of agriculture to all the people. Triptolemus discharged his duty well.



Triptolemus built a magnificent temple to Goddess Ceres at his own native place. In course of time the celebrations in this temple became a grand affair. The Greeks continued the practice for a long a time.



VEER HANUMAN

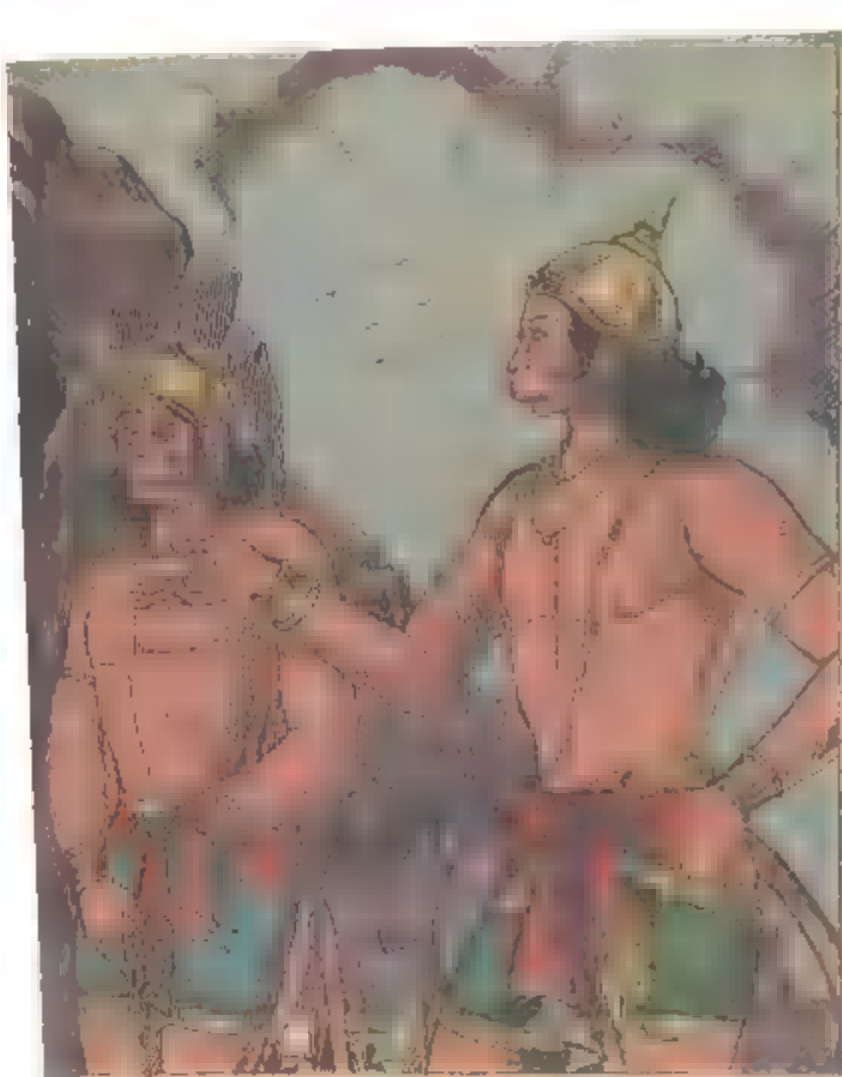
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The Vanaras, as ordered by their king, Sugriva, disperse in different directions in search of Sita Devi. The groups which went to the north, east, and west return without success. Sugriva, who keeps company with Rama and Lakshmana, assures them that the party which has gone south will surely come back with good news. However, at the end of the time allotted to them, the Vanaras are overtaken by despair.

As they came out of the tunnel, the Vanaras saw the vast ocean and its roaring waves in front of them. They gathered under a huge rock to take stock of the situation. The time allotted to them by Sugriva for accomplishing their mission had already expired. Naturally, they were worried.

Prince Angada spoke first. "Friends, you might recollect that on the advice of Hanuman, Sugriva had asked all the Vanaras to report at Kiskindhya in fifteen days. Later, at the instance of Lakshmana, he sent word to all of us to report to him within ten days. Thereafter, he asked us to go and search for Sita

MORE CLUES



Devi and gave us one month for the job. That period is over; it is, therefore, necessary that we decide what we should do. You all know, Sugriva is a task-master, and will not forgive us if we failed. In fact, I won't be surprised if he were to punish us with death. I would prefer to die in exile than face death ■ a punishment. Even otherwise Sugriva does not like me. It was only on Sri Rama's advice that I was made the crown prince. A failure in our mission would give him ■ good excuse to kill me. Why should I meet with such a humiliating end? I would better

die on this very seashore, giving up food and drink."

The Vanaras were equally worried as they listened to Angada. Some of them remarked, "There's no point in our returning to Kiskindhya either. We, too, should choose to die here!"

"Why can't we enter the tunnel again and go into hiding? There's plenty to eat there; moreover we would be safe from any attack from any quarter," said Tar.

Hanuman patiently listened to all this conversation. 'This prince,' he mused, 'knows how to gain sympathy for himself at the right moment. I shouldn't be surprised if one day he succeeds in overthrowing Sugriva!' He turned to Angada: "O prince, you're better gifted than your own father in several respects. However, don't be under the impression that these Vanaras would continue to sympathise with you and support you. They've to take care of their own homes and families. Besides, some of us, Jambavan and myself for example, are committed to our friendship with Sugriva and can't turn against him. You might also feel that this tunnel is

safe, but remember, Lakshmana's arrows can pierce even the stone wall around; so don't nurse any wrong ideas about Sugriva. I've no doubt he loves you as his own son. He'll never do any harm to you," said Hanuman reassuringly.

Angada was not at all impressed. He went on to protest: "Sugriva is not as noble as you portray him. His brother once asked him to guard the mouth of a cave while he was engaged in a fight inside with an enemy. And you know how he behaved! Far from obeying his brother, Sugriva placed a big rock at the mouth of the cave and made himself scarce! And don't you remember how Sugriva forgot to repay Rama's kindness? In fact, he has sent us in search of Sita Devi only because he is afraid of Lakshmana. No, I'm not returning to Kiskindhya. You may all go back. Please tell Rama and Lakshmana that I revere them and have no grouse against them."

Angada then suddenly remembered his mother and grieved for her. He prostrated before the elder Vanaras and lay on the ground to end his life.



The Vanaras wept. After taking a dip in the sea, they too lay around Angada, recalling the sequence of events—Rama going into exile, the kidnapping of Sita, the death of Jatayu and Vali, and their own misadventures. They shook themselves out of reverie when they suddenly heard a voice from the cave above their heads. A huge vulture was yelling, "Ah, what luck! There's plenty of food, just below my beak!" Angada whispered, "I'm afraid, we're in danger! He is Sampati, son of Surya and brother of Jatayu, who sacrificed his life trying to rescue Sita Devi."



Sampati's voice ■■■■ now even louder. "Who's it that gives me the shocking news of my brother's death? I haven't heard from him for long. Listen, you Vanaras, I've lost my wings and hence can't get up and ■■■■ to you. Would someone help me come down?"

The Vanaras hesitated, but only for a moment. In any case they were going to die soon, so why should they avoid any risk now? Angada himself went up and brought Sampati down. He narrated all that had happened:

"Ramachandra, the son of King Dasaratha of the Ikshvaku

dynasty, chose to live in exile in the forest, along with his wife Sita Devi and younger brother Lakshmana, to help his father fulfil a certain vow. Sita Devi was kidnapped by Ravana while Rama was away for a short while. Jatayu saw him carry Sita Devi in his flying chariot. As he was ■ friend of Dasaratha, he tried to save Sita Devi. In the fight that ensued, Jatayu was wounded grievously. Rama chanced to see him, and he then performed the funeral rites. Rama later entered our kingdom and befriended King Sugriva. At his command, we are out in search of Sita Devi. But so far we have had no success, and we don't know where she had been taken. We're afraid to go back to our king and report failure."

Thereupon, Sampati said, "O Vanaras, it's ■ pity I'm old and my wings are gone and I can't avenge my brother's death. We brothers were once proud of our prowess, and we used to rise high into the sky. When we went too close to the Sun, Jatayu felt suffocated, and I spread my wings and flew above him to save him from the scorching heat. My wings got charred, and I fell

down and have since been unable to move about."

"Do you know where Ravana lives?" Angada asked of him.

"My friend! I saw Ravana carrying a beautiful lady," said Sampati. "She was wailing 'O Rama!' repeatedly. I've no doubt now that she was Sita Devi. Ravana lives in an island called Lanka. He's the son of Visravasu, who is the younger brother of Kubera. Lanka is a hundred *yojanas* away, deep inside the sea. If you can cross it, you are certain to find Ravana and Sita there. I'll be only too happy if you help Rama overcome Ravana. You've to think of some way to cross the sea."

The Vanaras carried Sampati to the seashore, so that he could perform the obsequies for Jatayu. When Jambavan asked for more details about Ravana, Sampati said:

"After my wings were charred, I fell down on this mountain. All these years I've lived here and have grown old. My son, Suparswa, used to bring me food. One day, he did not come for a long time. Being old and hungry, I was angry. He requested me to calm down, as he explained why

he was delayed. It appeared while he was looking for food on Mount Mahendra, he saw a terrible-looking fellow passing by with a lady of untold beauty. Suparswa stopped him. But the fellow pleaded with him to let him pass. The fellow's humility pleased my son and he let him go. Later he ~~came~~ to learn that the man was none other than Ravana, the demon-king, and the lady was Sita Devi. That was how my son was held up."

Sampati was taken back to his perch on the rock. There he continued his story:

"When I fell down on Vidya-



chala, there was an ashram, which belonged to a great sage, Nishakara. That was eight thousand years ago. With great difficulty I entered the ashram compound and waited. Soon the sage returned, after his bath. I was amazed that he was accompanied by lions, tigers, bears, elephants, deer, and snakes. They departed as silently as they had come, after the sage entered the ashram.

"When the sage saw me, he came closer and said, 'O king of vultures, I remember you and your brother well. You both used to come often and pay obeisance to me. But what has happened to you? Aren't you well? I see that your wings are charred. Did anyone pass a curse on you?'"

"I narrated my misfortune and told him that I had no desire to live in my maimed condition and

that I proposed to throw myself down from the mountain-peak to kill myself.

"But the sage assured me that a time would come when you, Vanaras, would come here in search of Sita Devi and I would get a chance to help you, and that my wings would then retain their former strength."

While Sampati was saying this, the Vanaras could notice new wings growing on him. Sampati was excited with joy. "See, how the words of the great sage are proving true! I feel as if I'm reborn! There's no doubt you, too, will meet with success. Let me now try the strength of my wings!"

Sampati spread his wings and soon disappeared into the sky.

—To continue





TWO PRINCESSSES

Flora and Troutina were princesses; they were step-sisters too. Their father, the king, married a second time when the queen died soon after giving birth to Flora. She was soft and sweet as she lay in her cradle and, looking at her, the sorrow-stricken king was always reminded of soft, sweet-smelling flowers. So he named her Flora.

When a baby girl was born to his second queen, the little one had patches all over her body—marks like those seen on trouts. That is how she came to be called Troutina. Like the swift-moving fish, she was always restless and grew to be a cunning, cruel, and quarrelsome girl. Of course, she was a pet of the queen, who wanted her daughter to enjoy only the best.

The king loved both princesses equally, though he had a special

corner in his heart for his elder daughter as she had to miss a mother's care and affection.

One day the palace was agog. The prince from the neighbouring kingdom was being expected. And he was expected to stay for a few days. The most excited was Troutina, as the queen had ensured that she wore the most lovely dress and was present in the court when the prince arrived. She had heard of his virtues besides that he was handsome and brave. She nourished hopes of becoming his wife.

Poor Flora was nowhere to be seen, as the wily queen had seen to it that she was confined to her chambers, trying to complete some chores that she had given her. She was not aware that the prince had already heard a lot about the elder daughter of the king he was calling on. The praise



the people of his own kingdom often showered on her had reached his ears, too, and he was hoping to meet her.

The prince was received with due honours and greeted very warmly by the king and the queen. She hastened to present her daughter to him, and Trou-tina pretended to be shy, ■ the prince cast hurried glances at her. Somehow or the other, he had a suspicion that she did not fit in with the description he had of the princess. He, however, kept his doubts to himself.

A week of his stay passed. One day, the prince happened to

return from a stroll in the garden rather earlier than usual. He found a girl in his chambers carefully dusting the place. She wore ordinary clothes and did not have any jewellery on her. On seeing the prince, she tried to depart in a hurry, when he stopped her.

"Have I seen you earlier?" he said, gazing at her intently. "No, I don't think I have, but the description given to me fit you in every detail," he added with a sigh.

The girl was curious. "Whose description was it?"

"My host, the king's daughter, not the girl I saw the day I arrived here," said the prince with confidence.

"Well, I'm the king's elder daughter, Flora," the girl managed to mumble.

The prince was overtaken by wonder and joy. A few more questions to Flora, and the prince grasped the situation. So, at dinner time, when the queen proposed her daughter's marriage with the prince, he was quick enough to answer, "I'm willing to marry Flora."

The king could not control his joy. "Well done, my boy! Your

wish shall prevail."

But the irrepressible queen interrupted him. "Never!" she thundered. "You will only marry my daughter!"

"I shall marry Flora, and nobody else," declared the prince calmly.

The queen flew into a rage and haughtily said, "That'll not happen!" She left in a huff. She called for her horse and rode out into the forest where a witch lived. They were fond of each other. The witch understood her friend's problem and assured her of all help.

The next morning the naughty witch waited for the prince to return from his stroll. "Who're you?" asked the prince.

"I may be anybody," said the witch, who was dressed as a respectable woman, "but I would advise you to marry the younger princess or suffer the consequences."

"So, you've come to threaten me!" shouted the prince, catching hold of the hood that covered her head and part of the face. Suddenly, he saw the white hair of the witch. Before he could pick up his sword, she had muttered a spell and the prince was changed



into a golden dove. It fluttered for a moment and then flew away.

In the commotion that followed when the prince was not to be found in his chambers, the queen's servants caught hold of Flora and shut her in a room at the top of the castle. There she sat alone, weeping for the prince and weeping for herself, the whole day. But as the sun went down and the golden rays sprayed on her window, Flora saw a golden dove on the sill.

The bird flew in and perched itself on Flora's shoulders and began whispering into her ears.



She was happy to hear the prince's voice but was upset that a dirty trick had been played on him by the queen. The bird came back every evening after the sun had set and flew away at dawn. They drew comfort in each other's company.

The queen was surprised when her servants told her that Flora had stopped weeping. One night she peeped into her room and saw Flora talking to the dove. The queen rushed into the room and tried to catch the dove, but the bird flew away.

"I shall ask the king to send out his soldiers to catch all the

doves!" announced the queen as she stormed out. But as luck would have it, when she reached the king's chambers, she found him lying still. He had died suddenly. The ministers, who stood around in deep grief, told her that as his last wish, he had wanted his elder daughter made the ruler of the land.

The queen was shocked. She was also afraid that, once crowned Flora would punish her and her daughter. She and Trou-tina once fled the castle and went to the witch. All three of them then left the kingdom.

After a search in the castle, the ministers managed to find Flora. Elaborate preparations followed, and she was crowned queen. But Flora was none too happy with the turn of events. She missed her companion. Asking the ministers to take care of the kingdom, one day Flora disguised herself as a peasant woman and went out in search of the golden dove.

"Have you seen a golden dove?" she asked those whom she met on the way. None had. And days passed one after another.

One day, she went near a river for a drink, she came across

■ old woman. Flora repeated her question. "Indeed I know where you can find a golden dove. In fact, he is ■ more a dove. It was I who changed him into a dove when he refused to marry my friend's daughter." It was the same old witch, now full of remorse. "Take these three eggs," she told Flora. "Break them one at a time whenever you require some help."

Flora threw one ■ on ■ stone and in the next moment, ■ small chariot drawn by swans appeared in front of her. She got into the chariot and was flown to the balcony of a palace that stood on a hill, by the side of the river.

On the balcony stood Troutina, now looking all haggard. The two sisters did not recognise each other. "You're a fairy, aren't you?" asked Troutina.

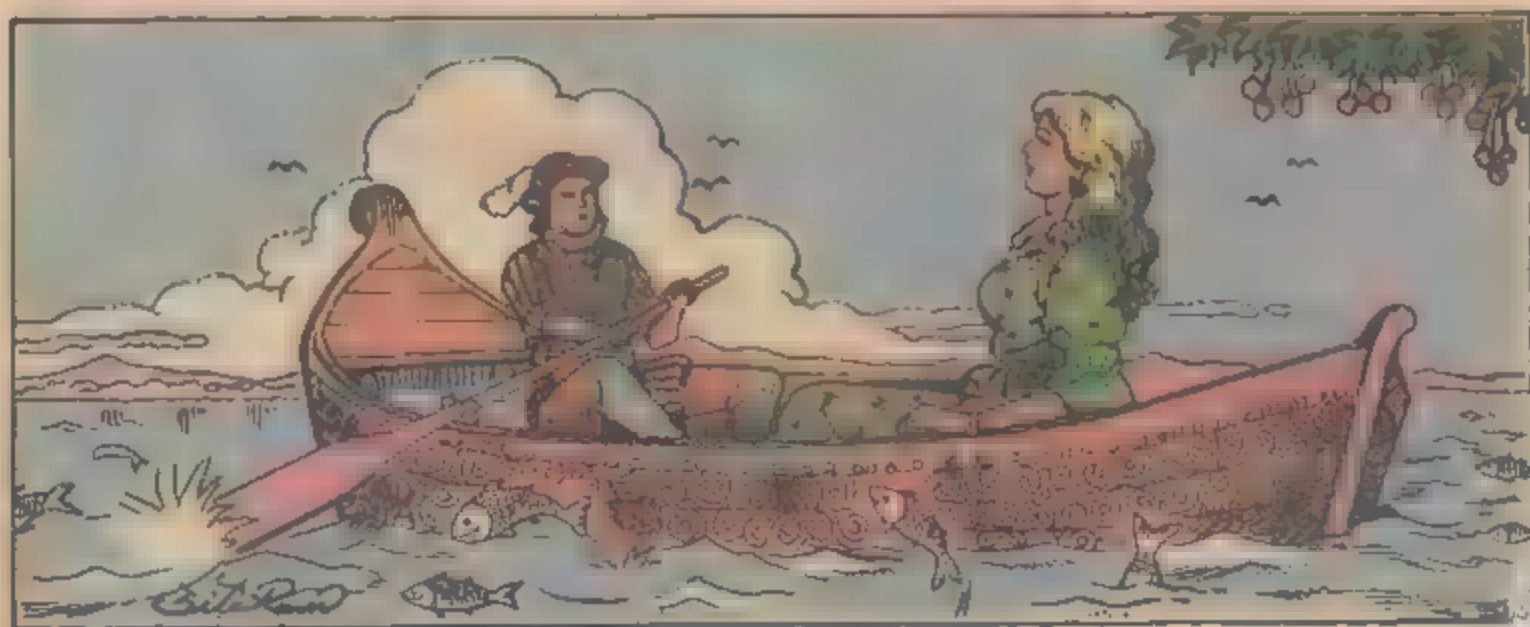
"No, I'm only ■ human being,"

replied Flora.

Troutina now recognised the voice. "Flora!" she exclaimed and tried to push her off the balcony. Flora then broke ■ second egg on the balustrade of the balcony. Suddenly ■ hundred trouts rose from the river and pulled Troutina down into the river. As she fell from the balcony, she turned a trout.

Flora entered the palace and in one of the rooms found the prince seated on a chair, sad and forlorn. Flora greeted him and told him all that had happened. She then broke the third egg. At once ■ beautiful boat appeared before the palace. The two set sail for Flora's castle.

As the boat sailed, several trouts swam along the boat. One of them must have been Troutina, now that she had come out of her own spell.

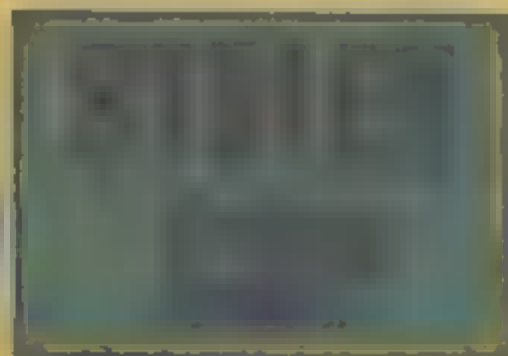




100 MPH

THE FIRST OFF-SHORE POWER BOAT TO DO **100 MPH** WAS THE BRITISH-BUILT SKEAN DHU, PILOTED BY THE COUNTESS OF ARRAN IN AUGUST 1980.

THE **FOOT-CUP** **STOLEN** **1895** **NEVER** **RECOVERED**. THE CUP COMPETITION WAS STARTED **1871**.

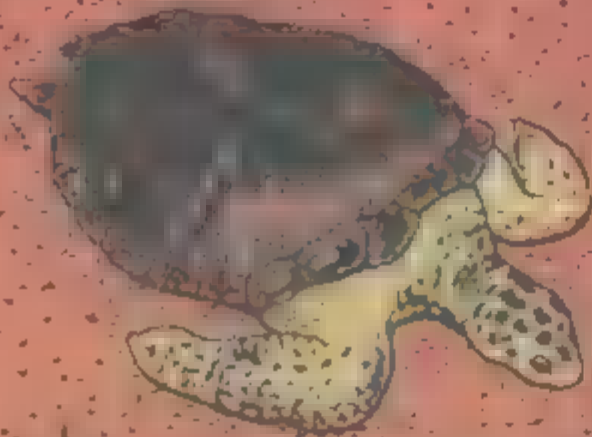


SNOOKER IS SAID TO **BEEN** **INVENTED** **BY** **BRITISH** **ARMY** **OFFICERS** **TOWARDS** **THE** **END** **OF** **THE** **19TH** **CEN-** **TURY**. THE FIRST WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP WAS ORGA-NISED IN 1927 BY JOE DAVIS WHO RETAINED THE TITLE FOR TWENTY YEARS.

SNOOKER



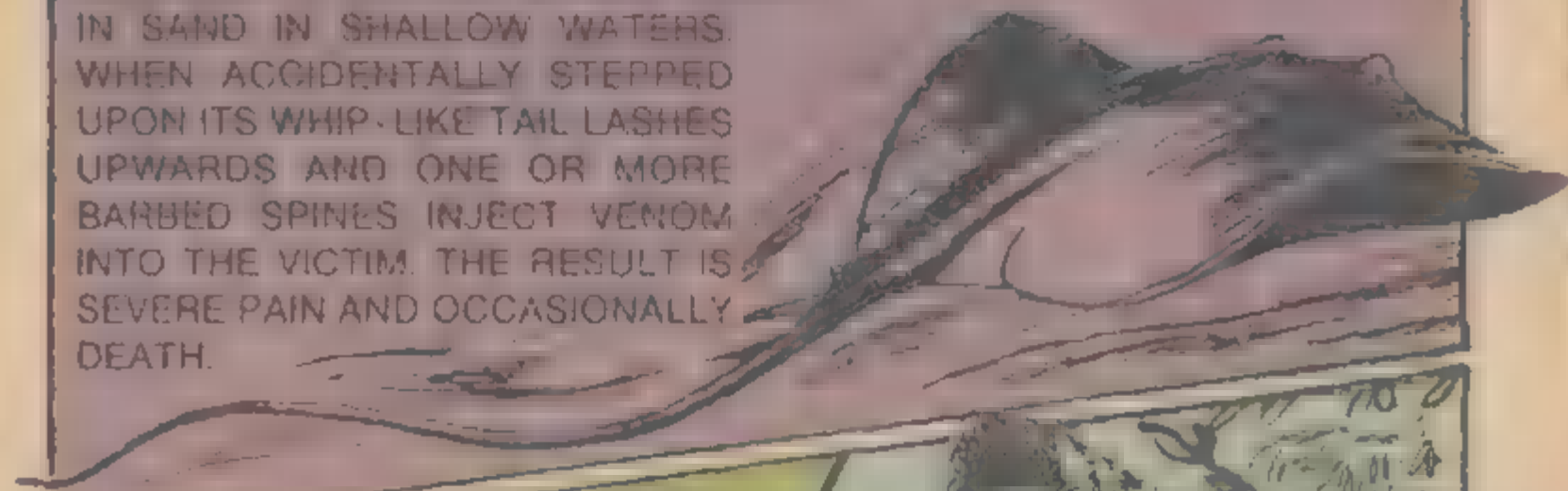
TURTLE TEARS



THE GREEN TURTLE HAS GREAT DIFFICULTY MOVING ON LAND BECAUSE OF ITS GREAT BULK. ITS EYES ARE CONSTANTLY STREAMING AS IF IT WERE CRYING WITH EXHAUSTION BUT THE 'TEARS' ARE REALLY A WAY OF REMOVING THE EXTRA SALT WHICH THE TURTLE ACQUIRED WHILE IN THE SEA.

IT IS SAID THAT THE STINGRAY CAUSES MORE INJURIES TO MAN THAN ALL OTHER FISH COMBINED. THIS IS BECAUSE IT OFTEN BURIES ITSELF IN SAND IN SHALLOW WATERS. WHEN ACCIDENTALLY STEPPED UPON ITS WHIP-LIKE TAIL LASHES UPWARDS AND ONE OR MORE BARBED SPINES INJECT VENOM INTO THE VICTIM. THE RESULT IS SEVERE PAIN AND OCCASIONALLY DEATH.

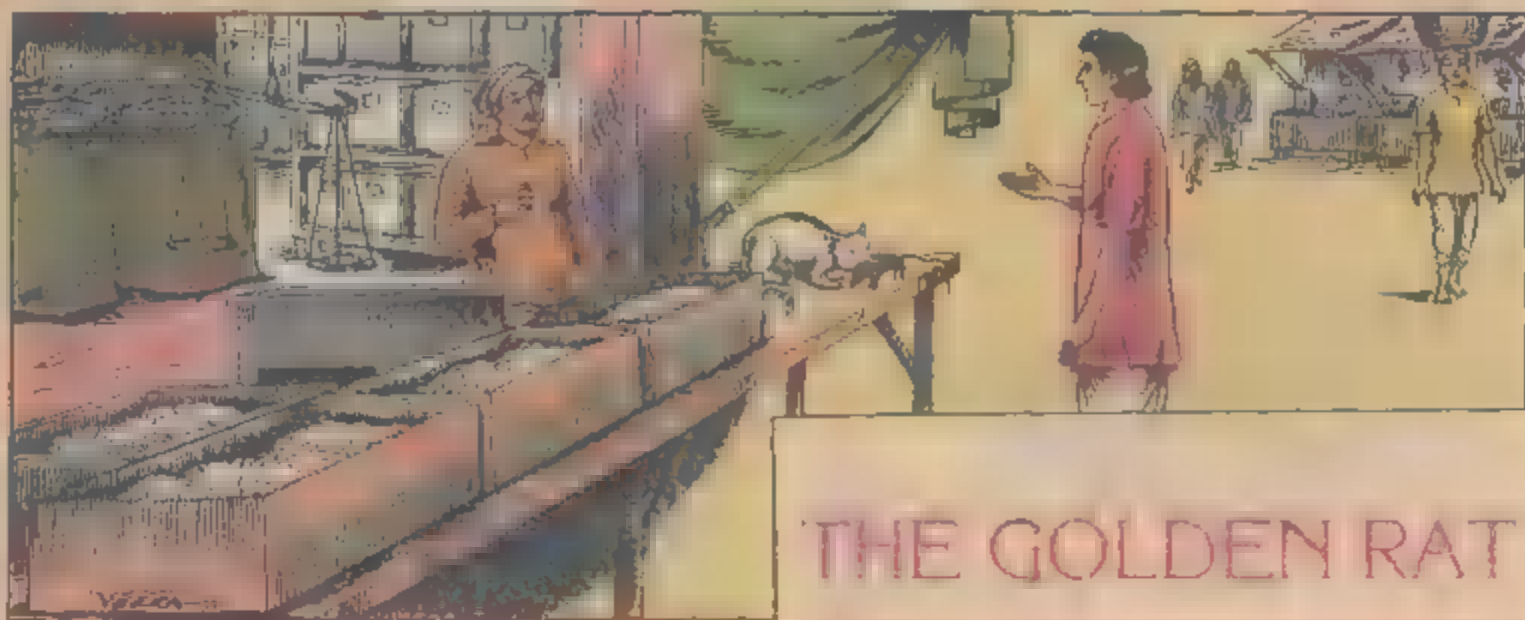
RAY OF DANGER



NON SWIMMER

GORILLAS CANNOT SWIM.





THE GOLDEN RAT

Ranga was a posthumous child. Parvati was expecting, when her husband Ramayya died suddenly. He was a well-to-do merchant of Mangalpuri. His relatives took advantage of the young widow's plight and robbed her of all that Ramayya had left for her under one pretext or another. But she was made of sterner stuff and brought up Ranga, without ever letting him feel any want.

One day Parvati said affectionately, "Ranga, your father was a leading merchant of this town, and it's your duty to follow the same profession. Unfortunately, we've been deprived of whatever little wealth he left for us. Without money, how can you start any business? Tomorrow you must call on Dhanapal, the wealthiest among the merchants here, and seek his help."

The next morning, Ranga went to the residence of Dhanapal. By a strange coincidence, another youth like Ranga was there and he could overhear their conversation. An angry Dhanapal was rebuking him. "Mind you, you had come to me half-a-dozen times and every time I helped you with money. But you squandered everything and have now the audacity to come to me seventh time. You may very well take that dead rat in that corner. And don't let me see your face again!"

The young man hung his face in shame and left the place. Ranga was now not very sure how Dhanapal would respond if he were to put forth his plea. As soon as Dhanapal went inside, Ranga picked up the rat. As he was trudging along, he saw a man fondling a cat. The cat jumped

down from his arms and went near Ranga meowing. Ranga threw the rat on the ground and the cat made a meal of it in no time. The man was pleased and gave Ranga a rupee.

Ranga now had an idea. He went to the nearby market, and bought groundnut for a rupee. He roasted it and after collecting water in ■ pot, sat under the shade of a tree on the path used by woodcutters. The weary men stopped by and rested for a while, relishing the groundnut and water offered by Ranga. As they did not have any money, each one of them spared a stick or two of firewood.

By evening, Ranga had collected a bundle of firewood, which he sold in the market and earned a little more than what he spent—a rupee. This went on for several days and in three or four months,

he could even put up ■ firewood shop.

As days passed, Ranga too became ■ prosperous merchant. But he never forgot Dhanapal and the dead rat. Ranga got a rat made of gold. Dhanapal could not believe his ears when Ranga told him all that had happened. "The dead rat that I picked up from here was my first investment which has brought me to my present position. I owe you the price of that rat and the interest thereof, and I've come today to repay my debt in the shape of this golden rat."

Dhanapal was amazed at Ranga's grit and sense of gratitude. He was so pleased with the young man that he not only gave his daughter in marriage but entrusted his own business to Ranga.

Sheeja K.K.



LEAVES FROM THE LIVES OF THE GREAT

SIMPLE YET NOT SO SIMPLE

Christopher Columbus returned from his voyage. His voyage proved that the earth **is** round and not **was** as many people believed **it** then.

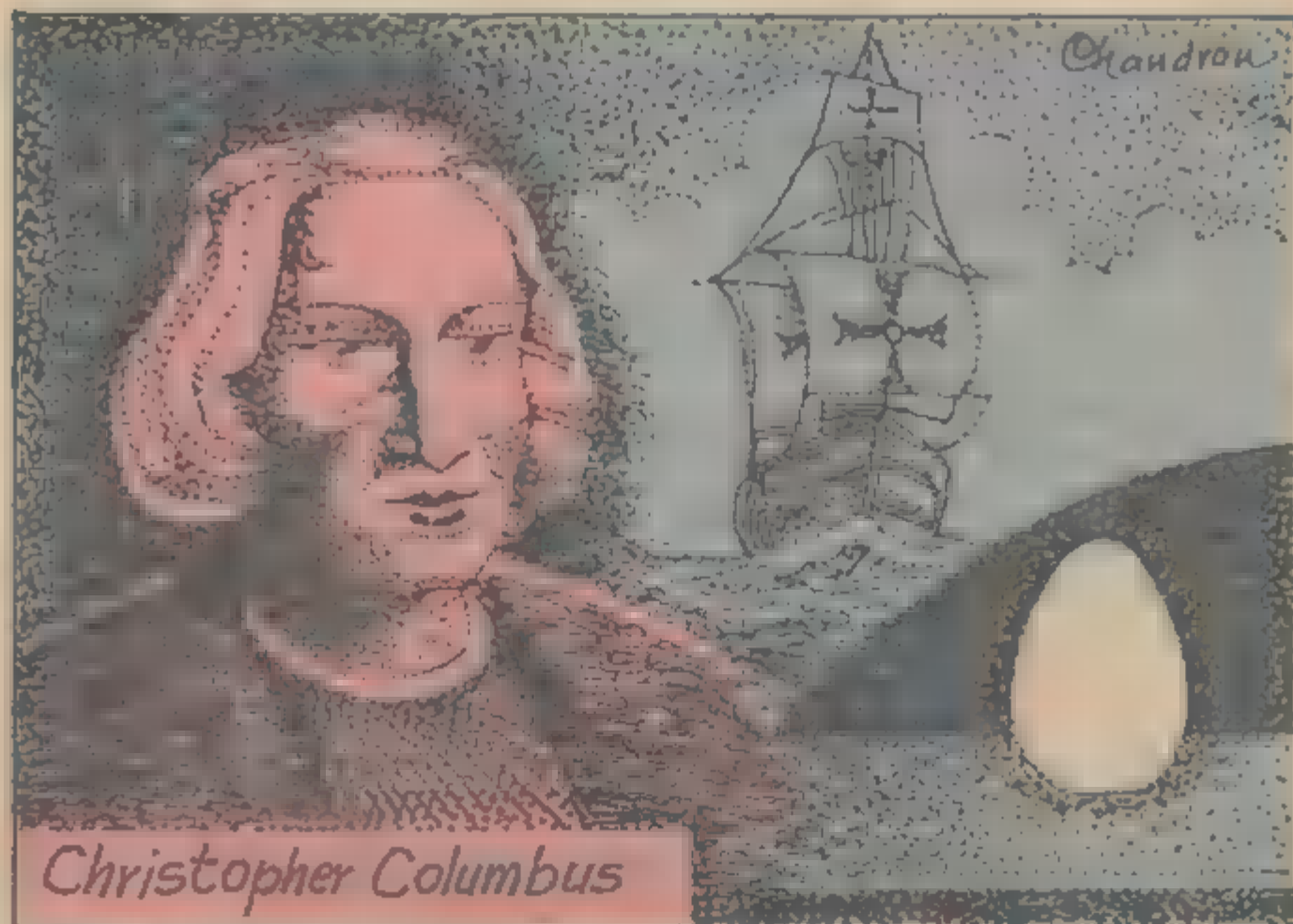
At **a** reception in his honour at **a** friend's house, one of the guests, an arrogant nobleman, observed, "Well, it is not such **a** great discovery that the earth is round! Anybody could have proved it. It is so simple!"

Columbus picked up an egg. Handing it out to the proud nobleman, he said, "Can you make it stand erect on its end?"

The nobleman tried again and again, but could not make the egg stand on one of its ends. Columbus took it from him, broke the shell slightly at one end to flatten it **a** bit and made it stand.

Then he smiled at the nobleman and said, "Did you see how simple it is? But to find this simple way **to** do it was not **so** simple for you! Do you **miss** my point?"

The other guests laughed. The nobleman sat glum, though it is difficult to say whether he got his lesson or not.



Christopher Columbus



TALES FROM MANY LANDS (RUSSIA)

THREE FRIENDS

Many many years ago, in a small hamlet, there lived a peasant widow and her son. When the little boy had grown into a fine lad, one day he said to his mother, "Give me one of the pouches of gold coins that Father had left for me and I will go out into the world and seek my fortune."

The good woman, handing out to her son one of the three pouches, said, "My son, be prudent in the use of your wealth." She then blessed him and wished him good luck.

As Ivan the young man wended his way through the forest, he met a shepherd with a

dog. "Would you mind selling your dog to me?" he asked pleasantly.

"But what are you going to offer for him?" enquired the shepherd.

"A bag of one hundred shining gold pieces," replied Ivan, dangling the pouch to and fro.

The man's eyes widened. He at once seized the bag, let go the dog's lead and took to his heels, lest his simple customer should change his mind.

"What have you brought, my foolish son!" exclaimed his mother, rather shocked. "A shaggy mongrel for one hundred gold pieces?"



Another day, Ivan set out with the second pouch and this time returned home accompanied by a white Siamese cat with a long fluffy tail.

"You know best how to make use of your money, in spite of my caution!" sighed his mother sadly.

A month rolled by. One fine morning, with the last bag of gold pieces, Ivan along with Tommy the mongrel and Jimmy the Siamese cat rambled deep into the woods. The dog and the cat seemed to lead him in a certain direction. He quietly followed them. Soon they met a hawker, who was resting awhile under a

tree on his way to the village, to sell his wares.

"Good morning, young lad," he said. "You have nice little pets. Would you like to buy this tiny trinket from me?"

"How much do I pay for it?" asked Ivan.

"Just five pieces of silver," the hawker was going to say. But Ivan came out with his own proposal. "I can give you a bag of one hundred gold pieces!"

The hawker handed over his tiny ware without the least delay and then snatching the pouch hurried away, lest his foolish client should change his mind.

Ivan fondled the plain rusted ring in his hand and then managed to slip it through one of his fingers.

Lo and behold! There stood before the astonished eyes of the peasant lad and his mates, two hundred little dwarfs, dressed in green, with feathered hats and equipped with tiny bows and arrows.

"Command us, Master. We are at your service," they said in one voice.

"My mother is very disappointed and unhappy. Fill her with joy and let her face glow with smiles," ordered Ivan.

"Your will shall be done to the last word, Master," they replied in unison and vanished in the twinkling of an eye.

When Ivan and his companions reached home, they were surprised to find instead of their crumbling hut, a handsome house with a lovely garden in front of it. Out of its door came his happy mother, bubbling with joy and with a broad smile almost stretched from one ear to the other.

"Son! Son!" she exclaimed. "I was munching dry bread sitting on our threshold, when all of a sudden I found myself in a great dining hall, eating not bread, but

delicious cakes."

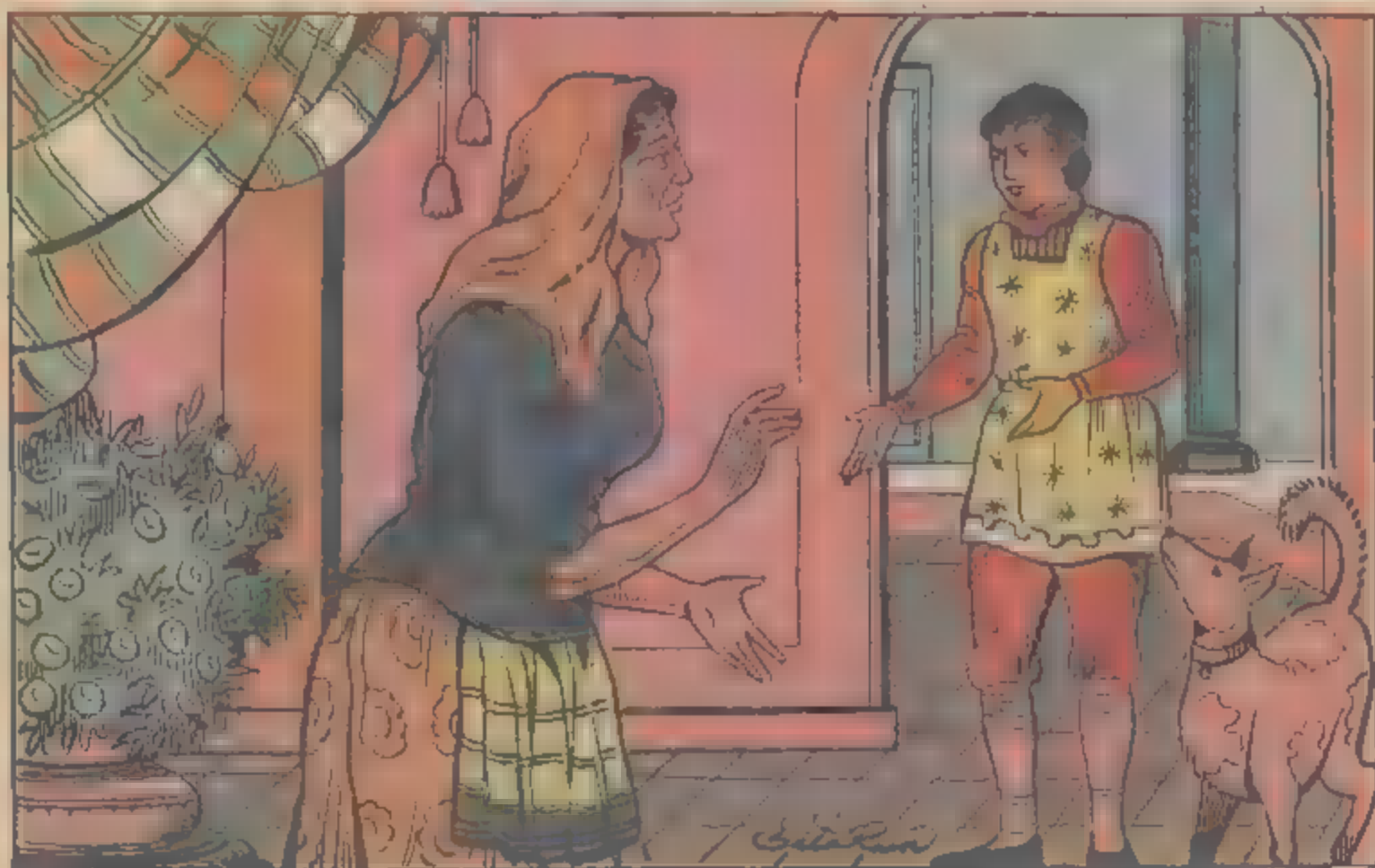
"Ah! It is Tommy and Jimmy who have brought us good fortune," said Ivan.

Some months merrily passed and one day Ivan thought to himself that it was high time that he took a wife.

"The princess of our kingdom is very beautiful, I mean to marry her," he said to his mother.

"What?" retorted the old woman rather stunned. "Are you out of your wits? A king's daughter to marry a peasant's son! You have nothing to offer her. Not even the tiniest jewel!"

Ivan went to a secluded place followed by his two pets. He took



out the ring from his pocket and slipped it through his finger. In no time there appeared before them the two hundred wee little men who said together, "At your service, Master."

"Bring me a carriage drawn by seven swiftest horses and load it with presents and gifts of the rarest kind," ordered Ivan.

Mother and son got into the carriage that stood ready by the door and headed towards the palace. The guards, much impressed by the magnificent sight, ■ once admitted them to the king's presence.

Placing the gifts before the king, Ivan said, with a bow,

"Your Majesty, though born ■ peasant I possess the wealth equal to any prince. I seek your consent to marry your beautiful daughter."

The king keenly eyed the jewels, rubies and precious stones spread before him and burst into laughter, "My daughter has all these and much more," said he.

"Of course," continued the king, "if you could offer us the sight of a crystal palace, surrounded by trees laden with golden apples, before the cock crows at dawn, we may then consider your daring proposal. Mind you, if you take up the challenge and fail, you will be put



forever into the darkest dungeon." No doubt, the king had been amazed at the boy's wealth and audacity and wished to test him further.

Tears rolled down the old woman's wrinkled cheeks ■ they journeyed homewards. "Don't you be anxious, dear mother. Everything will be all right," consoled her son.

At night when the stars began to shine in the sky, Ivan and his two mates proceeded ■ the edge of the forest. ■ slipped the ring through his finger and gave his orders ■ the two hundred wee little dwarfs.

On the morrow, when the king

woke up from his sleep, he saw standing before his castle ■ crystal palace surrounded by trees of golden apples.

He had no choice, but to give his daughter's hand to the peasant lad. The wedding was held amidst gay festivities. They all lived happily. Alas, not for long!

One day, an old wizard met the princess and told her to ask her husband the secret behind his marvellous achievements. "Before he goes to sleep tonight," he added in a whispering tone, "mix a spoonful of this powder to his drink. Once he consumes it, he shall utter nothing but the truth for one whole day."





Princess Timora did exactly as the wizard had bid her to do, for many a time in her childhood he had entertained her with his magical tricks and she liked him. She learnt the secret behind the crystal palace and garden of golden apple-trees and informed the wizard.

"Ah! Ah!" chuckled the toothless old man, "A mere rusted trinket is leading this poor peasant to the throne!"

Well, the king had already announced that since he has no son, Ivan will succeed him.

At nightfall, when the palace lay in deep slumber and all was

quiet, except the rhythmic sound of the crickets, the envious wizard changed himself into a bumble bee. He whizzed past the half-open window and entered the bed-chamber of Ivan and Timora who were fast asleep. Stealthily he crept into Ivan's pocket, got hold of the ring in his mouth and flew off into the woods.

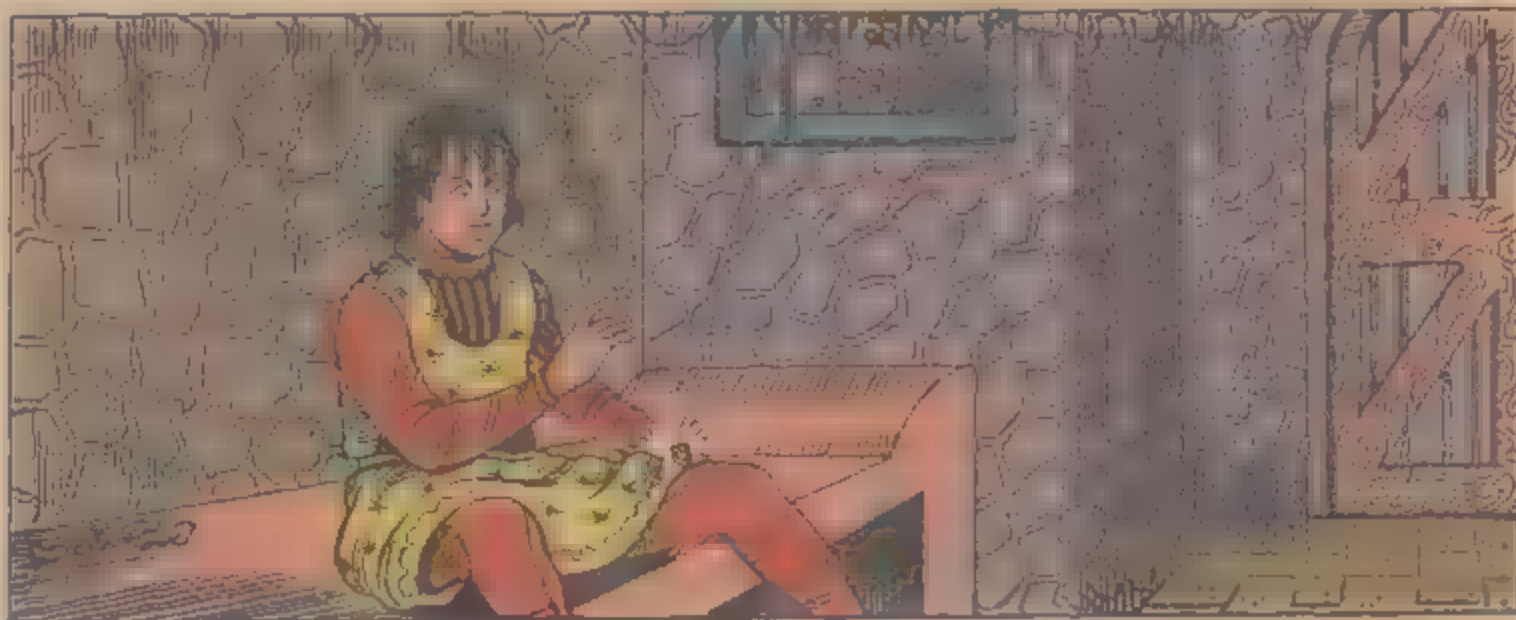
Morning found Ivan and Timora sleeping in the barren field. The crystal palace and the garden of golden apples had clean disappeared.

The king turned red in anger and thundered at his son-in-law, "You cheat, you have deceived me through a mere illusion. I grant you only three days time to restore the palace and the garden. If you fail, your head shall be chopped off."

"Our master is in grave danger," said Jimmy the Siamese cat. "It must surely be the wicked wizard who has stolen the magic ring."

"We must recover it as soon as possible. Otherwise the king will kill our loving master," joined Tommy the mongrel.

Soon it grew dark. The world was still when a little mouse crept out of a hole. Jimmy was about to pounce on it when it said, "Spare



me, Brother Cat. I can help you to retrieve the magic ring. I know where the wizard has hidden it, for I often frequent his place."

So the dog, the cat and the mouse hurried to the wizard's house, a large trunk of a dead tree. The grandfather clock struck midnight and the old man was blissfully snoring. The sharp teeth of the mouse gnawed into his ancient chest and discovered the ring.

It was nearing dawn. At day-break Ivan would be killed if he failed to accomplish the task set before him. The dog and the cat ran almost faster than the wind to their imprisoned master. The mouse sat ■ Tommy's back as he was rather slow to keep up with them.

Through the small window of Ivan's room the ring was dropped

onto his lap. That was when he was already preparing himself to bid goodbye to the world.

He at once slipped it through his finger. "At your service," said the two hundred little dwarfs.

"Rebuild the crystal palace and the garden of golden apples," ordered Ivan.

In the morning there was much rejoicing in the realm. When the king came to know what had happened, he threw the wicked wizard into the deepest, darkest dungeon.

Soon Ivan the peasant and Princess Timora were crowned the king and the queen of the land. And the greatest of the enemies, the dog, the cat and the mouse, became the best of friends and lived in the kingdom ■ respected royal subjects.

Retold by A.K.D

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